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August Garden Notes

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Van Wert, Ohio



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Owing to the fact that I accompanied my family on a pleasure trip through New England, after the Boston Peony Show, and that on my return home I gave my time to publishing a booklet about the Show, I have been delayed in issuing my July Garden Notes. I hope my customers and other friends whose names are on my mailing list, will accept the Boston Peony Show booklet as a substitute for my July Garden Notes, so that I may conscientiously call this issue my August Garden Notes.

For a few months I was without a stenographer, and during that time I allowed my mailing list of Iris lovers and Peony enthusiasts to be combined, and as a consequence I am sending the same Garden Notes to everyone. During the next few months I hope to separate these two lists so that I can mail my Iris Garden Notes to Iris lovers only, and my Peony Garden Notes to Peony enthusiasts only. When you receive a request from me asking which kind of Garden Notes you wish, I hope you will reply promptly, so that I will be enabled to render still better service. I am anxious to get every garden lover on my mailing list, but I want to be sure to get him on the right list. If you can help me to get in touch with real lovers of the Peony and the Iris, I will certainly appreciate it. I hope some time to have such an interesting garden that you will really want to see it.

Peony Garden Notes

From many parts of the country I have heard reports of a poor Peony season, but Van Wert has had the best season on record, as the late spring freeze did harm to very few varieties.

Russi major, a single Peony of a dull rose color, opened the season on May 1st, followed by Anomala Peter Barr, which is also a single, but of bright scarlet color, and with slender foliage, not so extreme, however, as Tenuifolia flore pleno. Corsica, a variety with wide, coarse green leaves and with single blooms of dark rose color, came next. Peregrina, a single of bright rose color, was followed by Tenuifolia lato folia, a good scarlet bloom with foliage very much like Peter Barr. Both of these varieties are splendid bloomers, and the

flowers have the best quality of any of the extremely early varieties, but of course they do not compare in quality, size and fullness with the Chinese varieties. *Anomala Smouthi*, similar to Peter Barr and *Corallina*, which is dark rose and of a different species altogether, came next. I might say in this connection that I have none of these extra early varieties for sale, and I do not believe that I advise their purchase, for they have more interest for Peony students than they have for the general flower-loving public. I give here a list of the varieties which bloomed in the next succeeding days and if there is any interest manifested, I will discuss them in a future issue of my Garden Notes. *Tenuifolia hybrida* and *Anomala intermedia* came next into bloom, followed by *Venusta*, a very light pink with only six petals, *Humilis*, *Northern Glory* and *Decora Elatoir*. These varieties in bloom bring the season up to May 10th, when I found the two very best early varieties opening their beautiful buds. Now, I have told you that I do not strongly advise the purchase of the preceding varieties, but here are two kinds, neither of which, however, I have for sale, but both I know will bring joy to the heart of the real Peony enthusiast. *Tenuifolia flore pleno* has foliage which looks like very fine moss, and its foliage alone is ornamental. Each stem of the plant bears a three or four inch bright scarlet, conical-shaped bloom, as full of petals as a first class rose. Nearly every visitor to my garden, especially the men, fall in love with it, and I hope, sometime, to have a long border made up of it alone. Now the other excellent variety is just as opposite in character and form as it can be, for it is the broadest leaf variety in my garden, and its blooms are very large, very single, of a most entrancingly delicate shade of pink, and its name is *Avante Garde*. I wish I could offer both of these varieties for sale, and I hope that you can find them in some growers' catalogs. I think it is quite probable that Mr. Farr has them, but I do not know. Here are some of the varieties which bloomed in the succeeding days, but which do not compare in beauty with the last two described: *Etoile du pluton*, *Daruica flore plena*, *Lucida* and *Otto Froebel*.

The season on the Chinese Peonies opened about May 18th, an earlier date than any other season of which I have record. *Rosette*, one of the new Peonies introduced by Dessert in 1918, is now large enough to show its quality. Its best recommendation is its earliness, and its second good quality is its erectness. In color, it is pink with a quality not as good as *Therese*, and I do not believe that it will ever be in the prize winning class, but that it will rank with *Umbellata Rosea* in usefulness. On the other hand, *Jeannot*, introduced by Dessert the same year, has developed in my garden for two years, most beautiful late pink bloom, which I regard as the equal of *President Wilson*, the \$50.00 Peony introduced by T. C. Thurlows' Sons. *President Wilson* and *Jeannot* were the two very best late pink varieties in my Garden, and I believe that every Peony enthusiast that saw *Jeannot*, ordered a root or division of it. They all wanted to order *President Wilson*, too, but the \$50.00 price stopped them. *President Wilson* is a very thrifty grower (much

better than Glorious), and I believe that in a few years it will be sold at a more reasonable price, and at that time I hope to have a nice stock of it.

I have two different Peonies in my garden growing under the name of Souv. De Louis Paillet. Here is the one which I hope is the true variety. The plant is tall and sturdy like Evening Glow (Hollis) and the bloom is of medium size with a deep pink color, and its blooming season is quite early. I hope that someone who really knows this variety will tell me that I have it correct. The other variety, which I hope is not the true one, is only medium tall and the color of the bloom is a rather dull rose shade. I imported the last one from France, but the one I bought in this country is the more beautiful of the two, and I hope it is the true variety.

Madame Guyot is another of the French varieties which I did not get direct from the originator, and I am wondering if my plant is true. The bloom has cream guards, lemon color body made up of narrow petals, and it has a cream center on which are some carmen marks. I hope that someone who has this variety direct from the originator, can assure me that my plant is true.

Evening Glow (Hollis) is one of the varieties which has pleased me most, the last few seasons. You know I told you in last month's Garden Notes that some Peonies had individuality enough to bring certain thoughts to my mind whenever I saw them. Now I never saw an Evening Glow in my garden, without thinking of a lighthouse like those we have along the Atlantic coast. This Peony stands so tall, with its vivid lilac pink bloom, held so erect, that it reminds me every time I see it, of one of Uncle Sam's pilot lights. I wish its color were softer but everything else except the lilac tone in its bloom is very much to its credit. If only Jubilee had such a carriage, how proud of it the whole town of Van Wert would be. Jubilee has one fault, its stem will not hold up the bloom. No place on earth, however, have I seen a Peony which can compare with Jubilee in its size and daintiness and as a Show bloom I believe it has no equal. It has been exhibited in two Peony Shows and both times it has taken the prize for the six best blooms in the Show, but out in the garden its stem is not strong enough to hold up the bloom.

Le Cygne has the highest rating of any Peony in the world, and for carriage, quality of petals, purity and dignity, it is unequalled, but as a cut bloom I like Jubilee better. Jubilee, notwithstanding its immense size, possesses daintiness, grace and charm, such as I have found in no other large Peony. Le Cygne has stateliness, dignity and beauty, all of which are very desirable. I would liken Le Cygne to a King and Jubilee to a Queen, and I am sure that every Peony lover will want both of them in his garden.

In single Peonies I like Shaylor's big white Le Jour and Kelway's Pure Love, which is also white. Kelway's Pride of Langport and Nellie are the two largest and best single pink Peonies I know. If any of my friends know of varieties superior to these I will be glad to have an opportunity to



see them.

For years I have liked Germaine Bigot and I consider it one of the best medium priced Peonies in the world, and I recommend it to everyone as a standard variety. This year I saw Luetta Pfeiffer and it impressed me as being an improvement on Germaine Bigot. The quality of its petals seemed most excellent, and I will watch my plant of it for the next few years with a great deal of interest.

I hope these Garden Notes will prove of some use, but you must not regard them as infallible. In my first issue of Garden Notes published last August I stated that the variety Miss Salway was not good enough to list at \$1.00, and I offered to give away divisions from my stock of it. Miss Salway is a Kelway Peony, and as I purchased my stock of it from the only man to whom Kelway sent the true Lady A. Duff, I felt sure that I had the true Miss Salway, but I did not have the true variety and my Garden Notes have done the real Miss Salway an injustice. I have this year seen a bloom of the true variety, the roots of which can be purchased from my friend, Mr. D. W. C. Ruff, Globe Building, St. Paul, Minn., and also from Mr. Farr, and I am quite willing to concede that Miss Salway ranks with Phyllis Kelway and Lady A. Duff, but all of us who purchased our Miss Salway from the genuine Lady A. Duff man, had better dig up our roots and burn them.

In 1915 I purchased my first plant of Philippe Rivoire from Mr. Shaylor and when it bloomed I immediately knew it was the best red Peony I had ever seen, and I wanted to get in touch with the originator and if possible, buy a root each of everything else he had introduced, foolishly thinking that all his varieties would show the same high class. At that time, French Peony growers were not so well known in the United States as they are today, and I was placed in communication with Rivoire pere et fils, of Lyon, France, from whom I purchased Philippe Rivoire and every other Peony bearing the name of Riviere as introducer.

This Lyons firm is evidently a large nursery and Philippe Rivoire was apparently named in honor of the head of the establishment, but I later found out that they were not Peony originators. The next season I got in touch with Riviere, whose address is one of the small towns near Lyons, and from whose garden the original Philippe Rivoire came, and I again placed an order for all the Riviere Peonies. Some of the correspondence indicated that Madame Riviere was in charge of the business. I received these two shipments of French Peonies several years ago and both shipments have bloomed for me. The Philippe Rivoire received from the big Lyons firm is true, just like the variety received from Shaylor, but I am sorry to say the one received from the originator's garden is not true. It is a red, but not as good in any particular as the original. All the other Riviere varieties in both shipments have bloomed and the only one of outstanding excellence in the entire lot, is Madame Emile Dupraz, received from the big Lyons nursery. It is of a different color and infinitely better than the variety bearing the same name from the originator's garden, and my experience with these two

varieties leads me to believe that probably none of the roots sent to me by the originator, or his wife, or possibly his widow, are true. I mention this matter here, so that all growers may be on their guard when purchasing Riviere Peonies. I would not be surprised to see Madame Emile Dupraz listed at \$15.00 to \$25.00, if it is as beautiful next year as it was this year, but I believe that all the other Riviere varieties need to show very much more quality than they have so far done in my garden, before they are favorably mentioned. Will be glad to get in touch with any grower who has found real merit in any of them.

In my Garden Notes last year I stated that in four years Bayadere had never given me a single bloom and I indicated that I was willing to discard it, but this year it gave me a few blooms of most wonderful quality, pure white and much better ever than Alsace Lorraine. While it is true that it was apparently a loafer, the blooms it gave me this year were worth the five years' waiting.

And so I reserve the right to change my mind on any views expressed in this issue of my Garden Notes. I am keeping my eyes and ears open to learn all I can about Peonies and if I make any misstatements I will take the very first opportunity to correct them.

Iris Garden Notes

This has been a splendid year in my Iris garden and the great event has been that Dominion bloomed, and bloomed true. I had two clumps with three roots on each clump, and the central root on each clump sent up a magnificent stiff, sturdy bloom stalk, and for nearly two weeks we enjoyed the finest quality Iris bloom I ever saw. The bloom stalk does not branch and the blooms are held close to the stem. I hoped for seed but I was disappointed.

Madame Gaudichau had scarcely less interest for us, and I believe we had eight bloom stalks over a still more extended blooming season. It is the best real purple I have ever seen. Dominion is so rich and dark that I think of it as a black purple, while Madame Gaudichau is a pure purple.

The immense blooms of Lent A. Williamson with its superb quality of plum purple petals and Alcazar with its still more brilliant coloring, just prepared us to really enjoy Ambassadeur, which, next to Dominion, shows more quality than any other imported Iris I have ever seen. Magnifica did not bloom, and it is apparently not a very vigorous grower, but Medrano, Grevin, Cluny and Raffet, all late importations from Vilmorin, showed us that the French originators are striving for both quality and size. Cluny is a splendid tall Pallida, with perhaps a suggestion of the same pink in its blue coloring, which has made Mdlle. Schwartz so famous. I had never thought of a light blue with a pink tone until I saw Mdlle. Schwartz, but now I know why so many Iris enthusiasts are anxious to get this variety. Raffet is a purple but it is not as good as Madame Gaudichau, and yet it is very desirable. Medrano is hard

to describe because there is no old variety with which to compare it, but it looks like a flower which might have been painted by an American Indian. It has Indian colors, and while I would not call it beautiful, it is certainly most striking.

Personally I like Mr. Farr's Mary Garden very much, but the French have produced a new variety, Madame Chaubaut, which has still more interesting and dainty markings, and as I saw it in my garden, I many times decided that for close inspection it was the most beautiful Iris I had ever seen.

Hautefeuille is the tallest variety of my eighty new importations and on account of its sturdiness and vivid purple color, I expect it to become a favorite. It is real purple but I do not think its petals have as good quality as those of Madame Gaudichau, and I am sure the last variety cannot compare with Dominion in quality.

I have sixty varieties of dwarf Irises, and I gave them more than usual attention this year during the blooming season, and I am quite sure that at least thirty of these varieties should be discarded, and it is probable that even forty of them should go. Here are the ones which I consider the very best.

Pumila coerulea is the most lovely sky-blue Iris I have ever seen, and it is probable that the variety Pumila azurea is exactly like it. I believe azurea should be accepted as a synonym. I believe the dwarf libra is a synonym for the variety Socrates, which is one of the very best claret purples. The blooms of this variety are held several inches above the very dwarf, three inch, foliage, and it has a reasonably long blooming season. There is an extremely dwarf variety known as The Bride which has both standards and falls of the purest white. I like it very much. Orange Queen is, I believe, the best yellow dwarf, but Stewart is nearly as good. Iris lovers who like Zua will also like the dwarf, Margaret, as both show similar quality. Most of the dwarf varieties have only one bloom on each stalk but Margaret has two blooms, and another extremely dwarf variety, only five inches tall, known as Transylvanica, has three blooms of rich red purple on each stalk. Eburna is a good dwarf of cream color and Bluestone is one of my favorite purples.

I believe the above varieties should be retained on our list of dwarfs, but here are a few of which I have a large stock, that I think should be eliminated from all growers' lists, as in most instances the color is muddy, and in all cases the varieties are inferior: Blue Beard, Curocity, Harlequin, Miss H. M. White,, Leopold, Pumila alba, Pumila cineraria and Barbara. If Iris lovers are interested I will take up the dwarfs in a future issue of my Garden Notes.

Each year I have a few Irises that bloom in November. I will watch with special interest the varieties which bloom for me this autumn.

If you believe these Garden Notes will have any interest for your friends who are interested in Irises and Peonies, I will be glad to place their names on my mailing list.

